

Some Additions of Mr. Lyfter to his former Communications about Vegetable Excrefcencies, and Ichneumon Wasps ; together with an Inquiry concerning Tarantula's, and a Discovery of another Musk-fented Infeet : transmitted to the Publisher from York in two Letters, of Octob. 16. and 28. 1671.

The Extract of one of thefe Letters :

— **T**HAT this Letter may not be without all matter of Philosophy, you may take an occasion to put this *Quære* to your correspondents of *Italy*, viz.

Whether the *Tarantula* be not a *Phalangium* (that is, a fix-eyed skipping Spider) as *Matthiolus* and others seem to tell us ? if so, whether some later Authors impose not on us by giving us a Cutt or Figure of a Net or *Reticulum orbiculatum*, which our English *Phalangia* are never (that I know of) observed to weave or make use of in hunting ? and whether the person bit by a *Tarantula*, be not ever, when on his feet, disposed to and actually dancing after the nature of a *Phalangium*, which never moves but by skipplings ; even as it happens with such that are bitten by a Mad Dog, who have been sometimes observed to bark like a dog, &c. And if so, what we are to think and credit concerning such and such Musical tunes, said to be most agreeable and tending to the Cure of persons bit by a *Tarantula* ?

But next among other things, I had the good fortune to present Mr. *Willoughby* giving me the honour of two visits, with a *Musk-Ant* * an Infeet observed by me not many days before his first visit : And though I cannot send you the Insects themselves, as having parted with all I had, yet I will the Note, viz.

* See of two or three more Musk-Insects Num 7. p 2220. and Numb. 76. p. 2281.

Septemb. 2. I found in a Sandy Ditch-bank, the first hollow beyond the Ring-houses in the high-road to *London* about a mile and an half from *York*, a sort of exceeding small *Pismires* (by which note alone I think they may be sufficiently distinguish'd from all at least that I have seen.)
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Those *without* wings were of a light-yellow or flaxen, and being broken at on's nostrils they emitted, like others, an acid or fowre sent ; but those of the same bank *with* wings, were cole-black, and these, bruised and smelt to, emitted so fragrant a smell like *musk*, that I must confess they were too strong for me to endure : yet having kept them some time by me, the more delicate sex were not displeased with the smell. And an Apothecary in this City, famous for his diligence in Chymical Operations, did compare them (unseen and not yet made known to him) to an excellent balsom, he is wont to prepare.

Mr. *Willoughby* inform'd me, that he had found the *Goat-chaffer* or *Sweet beetle* * out of season as to that smell ; and thereupon asked me, what I had observed as to the time of their sweetest and strongest smelling ? I answer'd, that I believed it to be at the time of the *Coit*, for asmuch as at that time, when I took them highly perfumed, I had observed the female full of Egg.

* Of which see
Numb. 74. p.
2220. and N.
76. p. 2281.

The Extract of the other Letter :

— I Send you a second paper about *Vegetable Excrecencies* ; the shortness of the former * and some things therein, perhaps liable to Exception, obliging me thereto.

* Of which see
Numb. 75. p.
2254.

Concerning the fifth and last proposition of the *first* paper, it might be more intelligibly expressed thus, *viz.* That the substance or *fibrous* part of *many* Vegetable Excrecencies seems not to be the food of the worms found in them : My meaning is, that the worms in those Vegetable Excrecencies, which produce *Ichneumons* (to which kind of Insect we would limit this proposition, and therefore expunge all other instances,) these worms, I say, do not seem to devour the substance or fibrous part of them, as other worms eat the Kernels of nuts, &c. but that (what-ever their manner of feeding is, and we doubt not but that they are nourish't in and upon some part of them,) the Vegetable Excrecencies still mightily increase in bulk, and rise as the worms feed.

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It is observable (to endeavour a Solution) that some of the *Ichneumons* delight to feed of a liquid matter, as the Eggs of Spiders, the juices (if not Eggs) within the bodies of Caterpillars and Maggots: Whence we conjecture, that those of the same *Genus*, to be found in Vegetable Excrecencies, may in like manner suck-in the juices of the equivalent parts of Vegetables. And *this* the dry and spongy texture of some of those kind of Excrecencies seems to evince: For, if you cut in pieces a *Wild-poppy-head*, for example, (or the great and soft balls of the *Oak*) you'll find in those partitions, wherein these worms are lodged, nothing but a pithy substance like that of young Elder; and if there chance to be any cells yet unseised, (which I have sometimes observed) the seeds therein will be found yet entire and ripe. Whence very probably they feed upon or suck-in by little and little the yet liquid pulp of the tender seeds, and leave the substance or fibrous part to be expanded into an Excrecence.

As for matter of Fact, to clear the truth of that opinion, that the divers races of *Ichneumons* are generated by their respective Animal-parents, and particularly that those, which the divers Excrecencies of Vegetables produce, are not *plantigenous*, I am in great hopes, the instance of *Poppy-heads*, swoln into Excrecencies, will favour us the next season. My expectation is chiefly grounded upon the condition and nature of that plant; which is such, that nothing can pierce the skin of it and wound it but it must necessarily leave a mark of its entry, the milky juice springing upon the lightest puncture, and drying and *concreting* suddainly into a red scar: And this, I think, I may affirm, that of the many heads grown into Excrecencies, which I gathered this Summer, all had more or less of those marks upon them. But our aim is here only to make way for the Observation against the next season; to which purpose also we propose the following *Quere's*:

I. Whether the shagged balls of the *Wild Rose* are not Excrecencies grown from the bud and very fruit of the plant; like as the *Wild-Poppy-heads* are apparently not for worms but seed.

Whether

2. Whether the large and soft balls of the Oak are not in like manner the bud and acorn with all the parts of a sprouting branch, thus monstrously perverted from the first design of nature ?

3. Upon what parts or juices the *Ichneumon*-worms, supposed to be thrust into Caterpillars and other Maggots, can be thought to feed : And whether there be not actually Eggs in Caterpillars and Maggots (as there are to be observed in their respective *Chrysalis's*) sufficient to serve them for food ?

Concerning the name *ἰχνημῶν*, although I could willingly refer you to Mr. Ray, who is another *Hesychius*; yet for present satisfaction I shall transcribe what the Excellent Critique G. Vossius saith (c. 16. de *Inimicitia*;) *Ichneumon* (i.e. *Mus Pharaonis sive Ægyptiacus*) *Crocodili & Aspidis ova indagat, unde illi Ichneumonis nomen, quasi dicas Indagatorem* (ἀπὸ τοῦ ἰχνημῶν;) *Reperta utriusque ova conterit; ut est apud Oppianum in 3o de Venatione: Nicander tamen ait, eum Aspidis ova humi mandare.*

Now a like Observation of certain Insects of the Wasp-kind, made no doubt by some of the Antients, occasioned the application of that name to *Wasps* as well as to that *Ægyptian Mouse*. Yet cannot I remember to have met with in any of the Antients of more than one text concerning those Wasps; viz. *Aristot. de Hist. Anim. l. 5. c. 20.* which *Pliny* (vid. lib. 11. c. 21.) hath rendred, in a manner *verbatim*, thus: *Vespæ, quæ Ichneumones vocantur (sunt autem minores quàm aliæ) unum genus ex araneis perimunt, phalangium appellatum, & in nidos suos ferunt; deinde illinunt, & exiis, incubando, suum genus procreant.*

How far this relation is true, and agreeable to modern Observations, we shall have perhaps occasion to discourse of else-where; Our design here is only to tell you, that we have enough to make us believe, that those very Insects, we have been treating of, are, for kind, the *Ichneumons* of the Antients,